IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for encrypting an identifier, the apparatus comprising:

a pad for entering an identifier;

[[a]] an encrypting circuit, adjacent the pad, for encrypting the entered identifier; ~~and~~

a controller receiving the identifier from the pad and transmitting the encrypted identifier to a verification device;

a first link, communicatively coupling the ~~pad~~ controller and the encrypting circuit;

a second link, communicatively coupling the controller and the pad; and

a housing enclosing the encrypting circuit, wherein the encrypting circuit, the controller, the first link and the second link are each embedded within the housing.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the pad comprises a touch pad.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the touch pad comprises an N-wire-technology touch pad.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the touch pad comprises a four-wire-technology touch pad.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the touch pad comprises a seven-wire-technology touch pad.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the pad comprises a touch screen.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the pad comprises a pad for entering a personal identifier (PIN).

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the encrypting circuit comprises

a CPU; and

a memory, coupled to the CPU and programmed to encrypt.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the CPU and programmed memory are the first CPU, programmable to encrypt the entered identifier, through which the identifier passes.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the encrypting circuit comprises a microcontroller programmed to encrypt.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the encrypting circuit comprises an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC).

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~12~~ 1, wherein the housing comprises housing resistant to tampering.

14. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~12~~ 1, wherein the housing comprises housing resistant to tapping.

15. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~12~~ 1, wherein the housing comprises ~~housing~~ a substrate on which components of the pad are mounted, the substrate being at least partially of chip-on-glass technology.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) An apparatus for encrypting an identifier, the apparatus comprising:

a pad, comprising one of a touch screen and an N-wire technology touch pad, for entering a personal identifier (PIN);

a circuit, adjacent the pad and comprising one of a programmed microcontroller and an ASIC, for encrypting the entered identifier;

a controller receiving the identifier from the pad and transmitting the encrypted identifier to a verification device;

a first link, communicatively coupling the ~~pad~~ controller and the encrypting circuit;

a second link, communicatively coupling the controller and the pad; and

a housing, resistant to access and at least partially of chip on-glass technology, in which the first link, the second link and encrypting circuit are embedded

19. (Currently amended) A method for encrypting an identifier, the method comprising:

placing

a pad for entering an identifier,

a circuit for encrypting an identifier,

a controller, ~~and~~

a first link communicatively coupling the ~~pad~~ controller and the encrypting circuit adjacent in an access-resistant housing, and

a second link communicatively coupling the controller and the pad, wherein the encrypting circuit, the controller, the first link and the second link are each embedded within the housing;

entering ~~a~~ the identifier on the pad;

receiving the identifier at the controller;

communicating the identifier from the controller to the encrypting circuit; ~~and~~

encrypting the identifier by means of the encrypting circuit; and

sending the encrypted identifier to the controller after the step of encrypting.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of forwarding the encrypted identifier for verification.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)